

## Message Text

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TO USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 107368

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 1879 ACTION SECSTATE INFO  
VAIHINGEN GER AND CINCPAC DATED APRIL 25, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1879

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINS, CU, ET

SUBJ: MENGISTU CALLS FOR CUBAN "SUPPORT" IN ERITREA

SUMMARY: IN CONTINUING HEAVY ETHIOPIAN PRESS COVERAGE  
OF PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC OR  
DIRG) CHAIRMAN LT. COL. MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM'S VISIT  
TO HAVANA, APRIL 25 "ETHIOPIAN HERALD" REPORTED FULL  
TEXT OF CASTRO'S AND MENGISTU'S REMARKS ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE PLAYA GIRON ORDER BEING CONFERRED ON MENGISTU.  
WHILE NOTING VICTORY IN OGADEN, MENGISTU IS REPORTED TO  
HAVE SAID THAT ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION STILL HAS LONG AND  
HARD STRUGGLE AHEAD BECAUSE "SECESSIONIST GROUPS IN  
NORTH, WHICH ARE NOW TOTALLY GUIDED, COORDINATED AND  
SUPPORTED BY IMPERIALISTS AND ARAB REACTIONARIES, HAVE  
NOT BEEN DEFEATED YET." HE THEN ADDED THAT "I HAVE COM-  
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PLETE CONFIDENCE THAT THE PEOPLE OF REVOLUTIONARY  
CUBA AND THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES OF THE ENTIRE WORLD  
WILL BE ON OUR SIDE IN THIS STRUGGLE." BY EQUATING  
OGADEN CONFLICT WITH ERITREAN ONE AND CHARACTERIZING  
LATTER AS " IMPERIALIST AND REACTIONARY ARAB" ATTEMPT  
TO UNDERMINE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, MENGISTU APPEARS  
TO BE LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE CUBAN INVOLVEMENT

IN ERITREA, WHETHER IT "RELUCTANT" OR NOT. FAILURE TO COMPLY COULD PRESENT US WITH A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY, BUT EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS WILL EVENTUALLY BE USED IN ERITREA AT MENGISTU'S BEHEST. END SUMMARY.

1. BOTH MENGISTU AND CASTRO USED OPPORTUNITY OF PLAYA GIRON ORDER PRESENTATION TO LAUD ACHIEVEMENTS OF EACH OTHER AND THEIR REVOLUTIONS. CASTRO DREW PARALLEL BETWEEN CUBA AND ETHIOPIA AS TWO COUNTRIES CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH US IN PAST, "CUBA WAS MOST HEAVILY US-DOMINATED COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA" AND "FEUDAL ETHIOPIA WAS BEST US ALLY IN AFRICA," BUT WHICH HAD NOW BECOME "BASTIONS OF ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION." CASTRO SAID, ETHIOPIANS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED "AS COMRADES IN STRUGGLE FOR SAME CAUSE, STANDARD BEARERS OF SINGLE IDEA AND SOLDIERS IN SAME TRENCH." CASTRO DESCRIBED MENGISTU AS A YOUNG OFFICER WITH "CLEAR POLITICAL IDEAS, (HAVING) AN AUDACIOUS AND ENERGETIC CHARACTER, AND THE MOST ADVANCED AND SOLID THINKING (PERSON) IN THE MIDST OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL WHIRLWIND OF THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION." CASTRO CONCLUDED THAT PLAYA GIRON AWARD WAS SYMBOL OF "OUR MODEST CONTRIBUTION TO ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE AND SIGN OF RECOGNITION AND GRATITUDE OF OUR PEOPLE FOR YOUR BRILLIANT CONTRIBUTION."

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TION TO CAUSE OF REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AND DEEP FREINDSHIP AND MILITANT SOLIDARITY THAT TODAY EXISTS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES."

2. ON HIS PART, MENGISTU OFFERED EQUAL PRAISE FOR CASTRO AND HIS VICTORY IN APRIL 1961 OVER "FORMER EXPLOITERS, TRAITORS, COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES AND MERCENARIES GATHERED UP AND ORGANIZED BY US GOVT TO INVADE CUBA." NOTING THAT PLAYA GIRON WAS SCENE OF FIRST POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEFEAT OF IMPERIALISTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND ANGOLA WAS EARLIER DESCRIBED BY CASTRO AS AFRICAN GIRON, MENGISTU SAID ETHIOPIA'S VICTORY IN OGADEN, WHERE SOIL WAS COVERED WITH BLOOD OF CUBAN AND ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTIONARIES, SHOULD BE INSCRIBED AS SECOND AFRICAN GIRON. IN REFERRING TO MUTUAL SPILLING OF BLOOD, MENGISTU SAID "THAT SEALS UNITY BETWEEN TWO PEOPLES AND IT WILL BE REMEMBERED ETERNALLY BY OUR PEOPLE."

3. YET, HE CONTINUED, STRUGGLE HAS LONG WAY TO GO BECAUSE SECESSIONIST GROUPS IN NORTH, I.E. ERITREA, HAVE NOT BEEN DEFEATED. MENGISTU CLAIMED "ALL PRO-

POSALS REPEATEDLY MADE BY ETHIOPIAN MASSES IN QUEST FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION, WHICH ARE STILL PENDING, HAVE BEEN IGNORED. THUS, ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE IS TO TAKE UP ARMS WITH ONE HAND, WHILE AT SAME TIME, OFFER OTHER HAND IN SIGN OF PEACH." HE THEN EXPRESSED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE REVOLUTIONARY CUBA AND OTHER PROGRESSIVES WOULD BE ON ETHIOPIAN SIDE.

4. CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM MENGISTU'S REMARKS ARE THAT (1) PMGSE IS COMMITTED TO INITIAL MILITARY CAMPAIGN IN ERITREA TO FORCE SECESSIONIST TO NEGOTIATE ON PMGSE'S TERMS, (2) PMGSE EXPECTS FULL CUBAN SUPPORT FOR THIS POLICY, INCLUDING MILITARY IF NECESSARY, TO ENSURE ITS SUCCESS, AND (3) BLOOD PACT  
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SEALED IN OGADEN BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES GREATLY APPRECIATED BY MENGISTU AND ETHIOPIANS AND BASIS FOR FURTHER CUBAN MILITARY COMMITMENT IN ERITREA. IT IS EMBASSY'S BEST CURRENT ESTIMATE THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL LAUNCH OFFENSIVE IN ERITREA WITHOUT CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS AND ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ERITREANS BY OWN PRESSURE ON MILITARY FRONT AND CUBAN/SOVIET/EAST GERMAN PRESSURE ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT ETHIOPIANS BY THEMSELVES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WIN SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH VICTORY AGAINST ERITREANS TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT MENGISTU WILL REQUEST CUBAN COMBAT TROOP ASSISTANCE IN ERITREA. UNDOUBTEDLY THIS FUTURE REQUEST/EVENTUALITY IS PART OF CASTRO/MENGISTU'S DESIRE TO ACHIEVE DECISIVE MILITARY VICTORY IN ERITREA USING CUBAN TROOPS, THIS MAY PRESENT OPENING FOR US TO NURTURE ETHIOPIAN SUSPICIONS OF SOVIETS AND POSSIBLY TO ENCOURAGE ETHIOPIA IN DIRECTION OF MORE TRULY NON-ALIGNED POSITION. BUT FROM ADDIS PERSPECTIVE, IT APPEARS SOVIETS/CUBANS DO NOT WISH TO ENDANGER THEIR ALREADY LARGE INVESTMENT HERE AND THUS WILL ACCEDE TO MENGISTU'S DESIRES.  
MATHERON UNQUOTE VANCE

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